

AWARDS OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES.

MATERIALS OF WALLS—CAUTION TO BUILDERS.

With regard to eleven third-rate buildings on the west side of Halford-square, Clerkenwell, the surveyor of that district (Mr. Sibley), having first given notice to the builder, Mr. Watkins, of Islington, that in building the party-walls, "unsound bricks had been laid in such a manner as not to produce solid work;" to which no attention was paid, lodged an information with the referees to the same effect.

On examination by the referees it appeared, "that the party-walls were built with a large proportion of brick-bats, and with mortar made of road stuff or silt, in the place of sand, and of a quality unfit to produce solid work; and the chimney-breast in the party-wall on the third story having been cut into for the purpose of inspection, it appeared that the heart of the wall and breast was composed of dry brick rubble." They accordingly awarded, "that the party-walls of the houses in question have not been built of sound bricks or of stone, or of such bricks and stone together, laid in and with mortar or cement in such manner as to produce solid work, as alleged by the said Robert Sibley in his said information; and we do hereby direct the said William Watkins forthwith to pull down the party-walls in question."

ATTACHED AND OFFICE BUILDINGS.—SURVEYORS' FEES.

Mr. R. P. Browne, surveyor of the district of Greenwich, submitted the following requisition:—"With regard to certain additions made to buildings of the first class and fourth-rate, more particularly shown by an accompanying plan: Whereas it is provided in schedule C, part I, under the head of "Rule for ascertaining area," that the area of every building is to be determined by the number of squares contained in the surface of any floor, &c., at or above the principal entrance, &c., but excluding from such surface the area of any attached building or office, &c.; and, whereas, it is also provided in schedule L, that "for every attached or detached building, distinctly rated (except any such attached or detached building built at the same time as the building to which it belongs, and carried up and covered in within twenty-one days after such building shall have been covered in within the meaning of this Act), such fee as is hereby imposed in respect of additions to, or alterations of buildings, of the rate to which such attached or detached buildings shall belong," then follows the amount of fees to be paid for such works.

Now I, the said R. P. Browne, having much doubt upon the construction of the above clauses, request the award and direction of the official referees of metropolitan buildings to the following questions, to guide me in the just discharge of my official duties:—

First. Whether to a building of the first class and fourth-rate, a kitchen building, one story high, may be erected, if carried up at the same time as the main building, or within twenty-one days after the roof of the same shall have been covered in, without increasing the rate of the house to which such kitchen belongs.

Secondly. Whether to a similar structure a building of two stories may be erected, if carried up and covered in within twenty-one days after the roof of the main building shall have been covered in, without increasing the rate of the building to which they belong.

Thirdly. If both cannot, may either of them be carried up after the expiration of twenty-one days from the roof of the main building being covered in, by notice being given to me for an addition to the main building.

Fourthly. Whether I should be entitled to a fee of 10s. for an addition to a fourth-rate building in either of the above three cases.

Fifthly. What is the meaning of the words "attached buildings or offices."

The referees determined,—"Upon the first point submitted,—that the one story 'kitchen building' is an office belonging to the main building, and that, inasmuch as the area of every building is to be determined by the number of squares, contained in the surface of any floor which shall contain the greatest number of squares at or above the principal entrance to such building, but excluding from such surface the area of any attached building or office area, balcony, or open portico, the

kitchen building in question, whether communicating or not by an internal opening with the main building, may be built with the main building, without increasing the rate of such main building.

Upon the second point submitted,—That a building of two stories cannot be erected in the manner shown in the plan and section referred to in the requisition,* if carried up and covered in within twenty-one days after the roof of the main building shall have been covered in, without increasing the rate of the building, being a building of the first or dwelling-house class, to which such addition may be made.

Upon the third point submitted,—That an addition may be made to a building of the first or dwelling-house class after the roof thereof shall have been covered in, upon notice being given to the surveyor of the district for an addition to such building, but no such addition, as that set forth in the second point submitted, may be made by raising a second story upon the walls of a kitchen building, as set forth in the first point submitted, until the same period shall have elapsed after the covering in of the roof of such kitchen building.

Upon the fourth point submitted,—That the district surveyor would be entitled to a fee of 10s. or 15s., as provided in the Metropolitan Buildings Act, according to the number of the stories of the fourth-rate building, being of the first class, to which any addition may be made of the kind, or under any of the circumstances set forth in the second and third points submitted.

Upon the fifth point submitted,—That an 'attached building' within the meaning of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, is a building in the same occupation with a main or principal building, and separated therefrom by one of its enclosing walls, without any doorway or other internal communication with the main building."

SCENERY AND DECORATIONS OF THEATRES.

At the last meeting of the Decorative Art Society, Mr. Geo. Cooper in the chair, the second portion of a paper on this subject was read by Mr. Dwyer. The subject was resumed with an examination of the advantages derivable from placing the scenery obliquely on the stage, referring of course to the wings and set-scenes, the flats or back-scenes being in the usual position. Some difficulties in perspective having been alluded to, it was stated that for drawing-rooms and apartments, the scenery ought to be arranged with due regard to the ground-plan of what is to be represented. This would enable actors to enter or take leave in a complete manner; they would not be observable by those in the side-boxes when approaching or lingering for that purpose, and their voices would reverberate and be carried into the body of the theatre. A scene in the "Flowers of the Forest," now being performed at the Adelphi, was described as an example, and also as clearly shewing that with some attention to ground-plan in setting out an interior, together with an introduction of bay windows, octagonal recesses, doors in appropriate places, &c., the variety and perfection of scenery would be greatly advanced.

Mr. Dwyer then directed attention to the principles of design, which he considered as mainly divisible into two classes, ideal and constructive; the former embodying certain characteristics without reference to natural laws, and the latter demanding strict attention to the fundamental principles of composition in art. Ideality, it was said, had in some Extravaganzas been developed in a surprising and ingenious manner, and delicate conceptions in a refined taste were frequently introduced with that remarkable freedom peculiar to the School of Art.

Some chalk sketches, designed for the scenery to the "Enchanted Forest," lately performed at the Lyceum, were exhibited as illustrations of the vigorous manner and spirit of this class of compositions. Constructive design was described as necessary to Architectural subjects. The opinions of Professor Cockerell and others were quoted in acknowledgment of the artistic talent, together with accurate knowledge of the architecture of

remote ages, which are frequently displayed in our theatres; and the reader suggested that if the attention of the students in decorative art at the Government School of Design were directed to the contemplation of the better scenic productions, having the beauty and principles of design explained, this would be found one of the most practical and efficient modes of acquiring knowledge.

He regretted that many admirable works of Art, executed for Theatres, should have had such a transient existence, leaving scarcely a trace behind them. The creative fancy and design in numerous instances ought to have been preserved at any cost; and he urged that students in Art would, in a careful contemplation of scenery, realize more freshness and originality in ideal and constructive design than from any other class of examples. Knowing its power and the vast unexplored range, he felt an earnest desire that scenic painting should be fully and properly estimated. Engraved examples might offer an interesting collection of the most ingenious fancies of the most eminent Artists.

Perspective, the reader observed, constitutes one of the greatest obstacles to perfection in scenic effects, and he alluded to the defects which ordinarily appear in set-scenes, from their being made up of various parts, placed at intervals along the stage, each part drawn, probably, at a different perspective angle. The peculiar manner of treating perspective for theatrical purposes was explained. While the situation of spectators varies greatly, the treatment must necessarily be imperfect. It is, therefore, usual to set out scenery with two points of sight, but he preferred, in architectural subjects, to have three, and to have them placed near the centre, so as to counteract the effect of opposition in the horizontal features of the wings, whereby the scenes frequently are made to appear hoisted. Scenes showing ground in perspective, are frequently spoiled by the visible junction of the wings and the floor, thus disturbing the illusion of distance attempted by the artist; and he would tint the lower portion of the scene with colour similar to that of the stage. Architectural drop-scenes were frequently objectionable from the same cause, and he maintained that they should never be thus applied, but only as pictures within frames, if at all.

The effect of linear and aerial perspective was adverted to, and the softening influences of colour in aerial perspective were described, as pertaining to the highest order of artistic talent. Scenes of this kind are composed of a number of parts, the flats representing sky and extreme distance, while the middle distance and foreground are broken into perspective forms. Float-lights being placed behind these parts, impart brilliant effects that no colouring can attain to, resembling the sunny spots of a landscape.

Linear perspective required, it was said, very great consideration, and failures in street architecture, and similar subjects, are often evident to the least initiated observer. The artist, however, has to contend with serious disadvantages from not being permitted to set out this class of scenes upon the stage instead of in the painting-room, and the manner in which they are produced ought to be borne in mind when judging of their merits. Street architecture offers a peculiar difficulty from the actors influencing the scale by their comparative size; this illustrates the absurdity of placing a facade of the National Gallery or other well-known building within the area of a theatrical scene, without a proper regard to distance. As an instance of a favourable effect, he named a scene in the "School for Scheming," at the Haymarket, representing portions of streets abutting on the quay, at Boulogne, which he considered far removed from a common-place effect, and that it also testified what might be obtained by placing scenery obliquely.

Mr. Dwyer next alluded to the taste and refinement Madame Vestris had first presented to the public in her drawing-room scenes, elegantly and completely furnished,* and he also mentioned with commendation some interiors produced at the Haymarket, in a similar spirit. He admired this perfect kind of representation, and was pleased with the manner in which it had been extended to ex-

* The plan shows a communication with the main building on the first floor.

* Attributable, as at the Haymarket, probably, to the superintendence of Mr. Blanchard-Lu.